The Second Bullet—By Robert Orr Chipperfield

"Stop!" She had risen and her voice rang out clearly. "I did not kill Mrs. Hartshorne."

THIS STARTS THE STORY

A dinner party is being held at the home of Colonel and Mrs. Ledyard. Among those present are their daughter, Trixy; her friend, Bebe Cowles; Cornelius Swarthmore, Wendle Braddock and Mrs. Allison Hartshorne. Mrs. Hartshorne's past history is clothed in mystery. In her presence mention is made of the release from prison of the president of the Riverton Bank after serving four years of a twenty-year sentence for conversion of the bank's funds. Mrs. Hartshorne suddenly leaves under the pretense of a severe headache. She is accompanied by Swarthmore, who expresses his love for her and obtains her promise of marriage. She sees a face at the window which fills her with terror, the significance of which is not revealed. She is found dead on the floor in the morning by her suspiciously acting French maid, Matilde. Detective Paul Harvey and other officers arrive on the scene. The officers believe Matilde is concealing information from them. Harvey brings out various facts by the questioning of servants and other witnesses—Mrs. Hartshorne's peculiarity in keeping large sums of money loose about the house; her carelessness with her jewels; her intimacy with Swarthmore. Harvey asks Rose Adare, a social secretary, in close touch with Mrs. Hartshorne's friends, to assist him in unraveling the mystery. Braddock admits to Harvey that it was he who sent Mrs. Hartshorne the $32,000 pearl necklace, that she had promised to be his wife, and that an antagonism exists between him and Swarthmore, whom he accuses of unscrupulous business methods. Miss Ledyard is accused by Harvey of the murder because of jealousy. She denies the accusation, but admits that Mrs. Hartshorne was killed at her mother's home and that she had the body removed in the middle of the night to the woman's own home.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES.

"IF YOU are telling the truth, Miss Ledyard," Paul interposed swiftly, "why should you have hesitated? Why did you not give the alarm at once and summon aid?"

"And have all the world know that this woman who had come from nowhere and foisted herself upon us had committed suicide in our home? Oh, can't you understand?" The girl wrung her hands. "The notoriety, the disgrace of it! To have us all dragged through the mire of a police investigation, our names blazoned on the front page of every scandal-mongering journal, our private affair discussed on every street corner!

"It would have ruined my father, killed my mother! People in our station of life cannot afford the breath of that sort of scandal, it is fatal! We would go to any length to stamp it out!"

Paul shook his head slowly as though her explanation failed to convince him, but he forbore to pursue the argument.

"What did you do when you reached the door?"

"I found that instead of coming toward the conservatory every one was trooping out to the supper room. Hickson was hovering about in the hall by the ballroom door and I caught his eye and beckoned. When he came I cautioned him to silence and showed him the body. We decided quickly what must be done. I was to go in to supper and keep things going until the dance was over, while Hickson would lock the conservatory door—the key was there, in the lock—and go up to Louise for Mrs. Hartshorne's cloak, saying she had sent him, if necessary. Then, should her absence be remarked upon, we could say that she had gone home.

"I don't know how I got through the nightmare of those two hours! I was on the verge of collapse. I wanted to shriek aloud, to tell every one of that terrible thing that was lying there in the conservatory. But I controlled myself and the night wore on somehow until the end. Hickson had slipped out right after supper, told William, and warned him to be ready with the car. After all the guests had gone I said good-night to my mother, went to my room and dismissing Louise for the night, put on a long dark cloak and wrapped that scarf—the first which came to my hand—about my head. When the lights were all out except one tiny glimmer in the hall I stole downstairs again and found Hickson waiting for me.

"He tried to persuade me not to go, saying that he and William could manage to get the body back to her home and leave it in the vestibule, for that was what we had planned. I was determined to see it through, however; I could not have endured the suspense until his return, and I was afraid that despite his loyalty he might bungle. He got her cloak from where he had hidden it in the closet beneath the stairs, and together we entered the conservatory."

Her voice had faltered and now a shudder swept her from head to foot, but she gripped the arms of her chair and forced herself to go on:

"The—the blood upon her breast had congealed, but it was not dry; and when Hickson started to wrap her cloak about her, something jingled in a little pocket in the lining. It was her latchkey. When we realized from that that her household would all be asleep a new idea came to us; to take her up to her bedroom and make it appear that she had committed suicide there. Then I remembered the blood! If the slightest trace of it smirched her cloak it would be discovered that she had been brought there wounded, at least. I tore the scarf from my head and wadded it across her breast.

"We lifted her sagging body between us and got her out to the car, but it was ghastly! I shall never forget that fearful ride, short as it was, with that limp weight lolling and slumping from side to side! My brain reels when I think of it—and I can think of nothing else! It will remain with me always, like a phase of hideous, remembered delirium!

"Hickson had pocketed her pistol and he carried, too, a tiny electric torch. We reached the house at last and walked the body up the steps between us. In the vestibule Hickson held it braced against the wall while I unlocked the door.

"It was dark and absolutely silent. No one stirred as we dragged her up through the sleeping house and laid her upon the floor of her bedroom. Hickson threw her cloak over a chair as if she herself might have dropped it there and closed her fingers about the pistol, while I placed her latchkey upon the dresser. Then I made the mistake which led you all so quickly to conclude that it was murder and not suicide. I arranged her skirts about her feet, closed those terrible eyes that were staring at us so relentlessly, and put her empty hand up over the wound on her breast. The scarf I rolled up with the stains inside and carried it away.

"There was still no sound in the house, but Hickson closed the bedroom door and locked it so that if Mrs. Hartshorne's maid should awaken and come down and knock she would think her mistress was asleep and the alarm would not be given immediately. The street was deserted, and I was sure no one had seen us; we rushed home as fast as we dared, and Hickson gave me the key of Mrs. Hartshorne's door. I slipped into the house and up to my own room at last, and just as I entered the clock struck 3. We'd been gone less than an hour, but it seemed ages and ages to me.

"The rest you seem to know, Mr. Harvey. Only that scarf was on my mind, and I racked my brains as to how to dispose of it. Had it been winter and an open wood fire blazing on the hearth my problem would have been solved, but I decided to burn it anyway—in the bathtub, as you surmised. I could not nerve myself to do it that night, however, for I was almost prostrated, and the next morning Mrs. Cowles, who had remained as a house guest overnight, came in and talked, and then my mother. I was compelled to drag myself down to lunch for fear of comment. Almost immediately after there came the news of what was called the 'murder.' It was late afternoon before I dared attempt to burn the scarf. I had to stop before it was done, for the odor and smoke sickened me and I was afraid it would steal out into the rest of the house and arouse questions I could not very well answer. I thrust it again behind the radiator where I had hidden it at first, and could not even bring myself to look at it again until yesterday morning. Then I discovered that it was gone."

"And that is all, Miss Ledyard?" Paul asked searchingly. "You have no knowledge of who killed Mrs. Hartshorne?"

"She killed herself." With the end of her confession the inscrutable mask seemed to have descended again upon the girl's face, blotting out the emotions which had contorted it. Her eyes dulled like those of a basilisk. "There cannot be any question about that. When I first came upon her in the conservatory the pistol was clutched in her hand. It has been identified as hers. One shot had been fired from it, and the papers have announced that the bullet found at the autopsy fitted it. If I had not in a moment of silly weakness tried to compose the body, no one would have doubted the truth."

"No one does doubt it!" The chief found his voice. "The woman was murdered! No matter where the body might have been found, or under what circumstances, you couldn't have faked a suicide bluff that would get by! Mrs. Hartshorne never fired that shot herself."

"But she must have done so!" the girl cried wildly. "There was no 'fake,' as you call it, Mr. Burke! I tell you I saw her with the pistol in her hand and the wound still warm and bleeding!"

"You didn't see any powder marks on it, did you?" the chief asked.

"Powder marks?" she repeated vaguely.

"Neither did we, and if the pistol had been held within arm's length of her the whole front of her waist around the wound would have been speckled with powder. That shot was fired from a distance of anywhere between ten and forty feet away, Miss Ledyard. When you found her was the pistol in her right or left hand?"

"Her right." The reply came in a mere toneless whisper.

"You could swear to that?"

She nodded.

"Well, there's your answer." The chief sat back in his chair. "That bullet entered Mrs. Hartshorne's breast from the left and made a slanting wound. It is no use trying to deceive us any longer, Miss Ledyard. We don't know how her pistol came into your possession or what passed between you, but your motive——"

"Stop!" She had risen, and her voice rang out clearly. "I did not kill Mrs. Hartshorne! I am not given to light oaths, but as God is above to judge me, I am innocent of her death!"

"Then who is guilty?" The chief rose also and his huge form bent toward her over the desk. "Miss Ledyard, who fired that shot?"

"I don't know!" she faltered, and in her eyes a look of terror was born. "If she did not kill herself, if she really was murdered, I know no more of it than you!"

Miss Adare Gossips

"I TAKE it all back, Paul!" The chief held out his hand. "I ought to have remembered from your other cases that you make the most headway when you seem to be lying down on the job. That scarf did the trick. How did you get hold of it?"

Paul laughed.

"The girl, Louise, brought it to me herself this morning; that was pure luck, but it was superfluous evidence as far as I was concerned, although it served as a good dramatic touch to force Miss Ledyard to speak. Don't forget that I had a witness to that strange homecoming."

He told of what the trained nurse had seen from the house across the street, but the chief shook his head.

"Still I can't see what you got out of that to connect Miss Ledyard with the woman in the car," he commented. "That was a pretty nervy accusation of yours, all right!"

"Not with the data I already had," protested Paul. "In the first place, chief, I knew from my examination of that room that Mrs. Hartshorne had not been killed there. Besides the arrangement of the body and the missing cartridge shell there was one small but conclusive point you overlooked; a faint, scarcely visible smear of blood upon the lining of the cloak which lay across the chair. If you had been interested in psychology, too, you would have seen the significance of the incongruity between the ruthlessness of the murder itself and the pity—call it sentimentality, if you like—displayed in the arrangement of the body. I was sure that a woman had a hand in that.

"I learned subsequently that Miss Ledyard had started the ball of gossip rolling about Mrs. Hartshorne's antecedents, and the motive for her spite; she was in love with Cornelius Swarthmore, who had virtually jilted her for Mrs. Hartshorne. You had a good look at her this afternoon, chief; you heard how she carried out a scheme that a weaker, more gentle character would have shrunk from. That girl is strong, but her passions are stronger. She would be quite capable in a jealous mania of killing any one who stood in her way."

"Then why on earth did you let her go?" demanded the chief. "Why did you object to her immediate arrest?"

"Because I think she would be equally capable of a supreme sacrifice if her affections prompted it; not to the extent of relinquishing the man she loved to a victorious rival, but of protecting that man at any risk to herself from the consequences of an act she thought was his. She is quite capable of having killed Mrs. Hartshorne; but did she? It would hold the department up to more than ridicule if we placed the daughter of one of our foremost families under arrest on a false charge. I admit her explanation of why she concealed and removed the body was inadequate—"

"Inadequate?" The chief caught him up on the word. "It was as full of holes as a sieve!"

"But the motive for her act would be equally comprehensible whether she herself were guilty or suspected the identity of the murderer and sought to shield him." Paul retorted. "However, I did not surmise that the crime had been committed there until Saturday, when I returned for the second interview. I saw then that both Miss Ledyard and the butler were keeping something back, and that an understanding of some sort existed between them. When I mentioned Louise's remark that Mrs. Cowles had complained of the locking of the conservatory door from midnight on they exchanged a most significant warning glance and both promptly denied the assertion. The fact that Mrs. Hartshorne's cloak had mysteriously disappeared at the same hour, but that her departure was seen by no one, the crushed orchid bed—all aroused my suspicions; but it remained for Hickson to add the final link in the chain.

"When he assured me, quite gratuitously, of the patriotism of his family, he said that his son, William, the Ledyards' chauffeur, had suffered a shattered knee at Ypres. Miss Bayne's description of the lame chauffeur who drove the car in which the dead woman was brought to her home was too conclusive to be a mere coincidence. That scarf in the hands of a vengeful maid was only corroborative evidence, as you see."

"It was great work, Paul, but don't spring a surprise like that on me again!" The chief grinned sheepishly. "You told me not to expect too much from Miss Ledyard's statement! Good Lord, if I'd expected half of what was coming, I would never have kicked about the lack of progress at the inquest. The press can yell its fool head off now, and welcome! Just wait till we spring this on them!"

"We've got to have something tangible to spring first," Paul reminded him. "Of course, we can hold Miss Ledyard, the butler and the chauffeur as accessories after the fact, but that doesn't get us anywhere."

"Well, what do you propose to do about it?" asked the chief. "You have no basis yet for a charge against Swarthmore—"

"There's another woman in this case who hasn't told all she knows," Paul remarked. "She won't, either, except of her own free will. I tell you, chief, we've gone a step or two in the right direction, but we're not out of the woods yet."

When he reached his rooms he found Rose Adare patiently waiting outside.

"I phoned right after the funeral, but no one answered, so I came straight here," she announced. "I won't have much time to talk, for I've got an appointment to attend to some correspondence for Mrs. Cowles. I thought that perhaps you could walk over there with me——?"

"Indeed I will!" he assented heartily. "Did anything occur at the funeral which struck you as being significant?"

"Well, there was the usual mob of morbid sight-seers; the police had to hold them back from fairly storming the church, early at it was." Rose fell into step beside him and went on. "I got in, though, and managed to sit where you told me. Jenny was there, and the cook, and I thought once that I caught a glimpse of that kitchenmaid, Sadie, but I must have been mistaken."

"Why?" asked Paul.

"Because she never could have got hold of the clothes the girl that I saw had on. They were loud enough to wake the dead, but expensive! The paradise on her hat alone was worth fifty dollars if it cost a cent; and real white fox doesn't grow on trees! There wasn't one of those who called themselves Mrs. Hartshorne's friends in the whole church, that I could see, at least none that I recognized, but something funny did happen; odd, I mean."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

DAILY NOVELETTE

"BISCUITS"

By Doris I. Condon

"MISS MANDY, Miss Mandy," came wafted on the hot August breeze through the screen door to the woman busy at the zinc. Her plump arms were crimson from ecntact with hot water, and her hair clung in little dark tendrils to her forehead.

"Now what on earth does that man want," she said to herself as she dried her hands on her apron and, opening the door, ducked under her line of newly washed clothes.

"Yes, Hiram, I'm coming," she called as she caught sight of a bald head and a pair of blue goggles appearing above the back fence.

Mandy Welmont and Hiram Long, spinster and professor, respectively, had lived side by side for the last twenty years, and Mandy had always been a friend in need to the lonely old bachelor and neighbor.

The owner of the blue goggles uttered a sigh of relief as he saw her and raised himself on tiptoe.

"Look, Miss Mandy," he said dejectedly, "I tried to make some bread." And, sticking his hands through the fence, he awaited Miss Mandy's inspection.

All ten fingers were covered with a wet, sticky mass. It hung in strings and dropped upon Miss Mandy's bed of pansies beside the fence.

"My, what a mess!" she exclaimed. "You wait and I'll come right over."

Going down to the corner of the fence she squeezed through a hole which had been made by knocking off some slats. Hiram, with his hands extended straight before him, was waiting at the door. She pushed him into the kitchen, took down the wash basin and filled it with water.

"Now put your hands in there and git 'em clean while I see what this mess on the table is."

A pan of what looked like very soft putty graced the table. Hiram, at the sink, dried his hands on the roller-towel. "I was down to Mrs. Smith's to supper last night and she had some biscuits. They tasted fine, so I thought I'd make some. Why," as he caught sight of the empty pan, "where are they?"

"Threw 'em away," said Mandy shortly. "Sit down and I'll make you some good ones."

Hiram sat with his hands on his knees, his eyes never leaving Mandy until the oven door banged on the biscuits.

"I've got to go home now, Hiram. Those biscuits will be done in just twenty minutes. I'd eat them with that peach marmalade I gave you last night if I were you," and the screen door slammed behind her.

Hiram sat still in his chair, his eyes on the clock until the final second of the twenty minutes was up. Then he went to the oven. The door was hot and he grabbed his coat tails to open it. Ah, what a fragrance! Setting the pan of brown biscuits upon the table he went to the closet and came back with the peach marmalade, butter and a knife. Breaking open one of the biscuits he put in a chunk of butter, spread on some marmalade and took a big bite. Paradise could be nothing like this! Life was worth living after all.

Hiram set the rest of the biscuits back on the stove and with a satisfied feeling in his stomach, and an expectant look upon his face, went around to Mandy's front porch.

The sun was just going down, and Mandy, by the slowly fading light was knitting. Hiram gazed into vacancy as he seated himself on the steps.

"Were the biscuits good, Hiram?"

"They were fine, Miss Mandy," answered Hiram, turning to look up at her. Brown hair and a round, smiling face made a pleasant woman.

"Miss Mandy," began Hiram, "I was thinking while I ate those biscuits you made me. What's the use of you running this house when you might come over and live in mine, and then neither of us would be lonesome."

"Why, I could, couldn't I?" replied Mandy.

And that is why the next week found Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Long smiling at each other across a plate of golden brown biscuits.

The next complete novelette—Romance vs. Rice.

Awful to Contemplate

After the club meeting two women met in the hall.

"I was just thinking about poor Uriah Umson," said one.

"What about him?"

"You know what a lovely home his wife bought with his life insurance money?"

"Yes, of course."

"You know the man who married his widow married again as soon as Mrs. Umson passed away.

"What, again?"

"Yes. That's three times for him."

"No wonder you say poor Uriah!"

"Yes, indeed. Just think how he must feel up there above, looking down on a man he never saw living in his house as his wife's second husband with his third wife." — Youngstown Telegram.

DREAMLAND ADVENTURES--By Daddy

"THE LAUGHING MAN"

(Cranky Jimkins and Laughing Man race their motortrucks for a fortune. Laughing Man is delayed by doing kind acts for persons in need, and Cranky Jimkins goes ahead.)

Winner of the Fortune

FARMER FIELD'S home stood on a hill and Cranky Jimkins and Laughing Man racing toward it could see it from far away. Cranky Jimkins got such a start by meanly rushing past the Laughing Man after the latter had pulled him out of the clay hole that it seemed certain that he would win.

But Cranky Jimkins was taking no chances. He drove madly—forcing all others out of the road. About a mile from Farmer Field's home he came upon an old farmer driving a one-horse rig. When the farmer didn't get the rig out of the way fast enough, Cranky Jimkins cut around to the side instead of slowing down as he should have done. There wasn't room enough for the truck and rig on the narrow road. Crash! Cranky Jimkins smashed into one wheel of the rig, and over went the buggy into the ditch on top of the old farmer.

Cranky Jimkins never stopped, but speeded up faster than ever.

The Laughing Man was right behind Cranky Jimkins. He still had a chance to win, for his truck was fully as speedy as that of his rival. But when the old farmer's rig was tipped over Laughing Man again forgot about the race. His only thought was to aid the man under the buggy. He brought his truck to a quick stop. Billy jumped off and caught the horse before it could run away. Then in less than a minute Laughing Man and his passengers turned the buggy right side up, and rescued the old farmer.

As luck would have it, the old farmer had landed in a bunch of soft grass

He saw the farmer coming

and wasn't hurt a bit, and neither was his buggy.

But the farmer was mad—my how mad he was!

"Jumping Ginger, why's that crazy chump driving so fast?" he yelled.

"He is racing with me to sell Farmer Field a motortruck," said Laughing Man, looking up the hill, "and I guess he has won the race, for there he is turning into Farmer Field's yard."

"Jumping Ginger, you can bet he hasn't won the race," yelled the old farmer. "Is your motortruck a good truck?"

"It's a fine truck!" shouted all of Laughing Man's passengers before Laughing Man could speak. "It pulled Cranky Jimkin's truck out of a clay hole and it would have won the race if Laughing Man hadn't made so many stops to do good deeds to persons in need."

"Ho, ho, ho! If I have lost, I've lost. Come on, I'll take you on your way," said Laughing Man, but his laugh showed that he felt pretty bad about losing and was just trying to be cheerful.

"Jumping Ginger, you haven't lost. I'll buy your truck," said the farmer.

"And who are you?" asked Laughing Man, his eyes opening wide.

"I know! I know! It's Farmer Field, himself!" cried Peggy.

"And we are his neighbors of Cherry Township, and we will all buy trucks," cried the men and women Laughing Man had picked up. "We told you we would help you all we could."

"And I am Farmer Field's nephew, Jimmie Lane," cried the lame boy. "I'll buy a truck, and I'll sell a score more in Peach Township. I told you I would help you all I could."

"And I'm Farmer Field's aunt, Grandma Row," said the little old woman, "I'll buy a truck, and so will all my friends in Pear Township. I told you I would help you all I could."

"Bow-wow! I made Balky Sam drag Cranky Jimkins's truck into the ditch. I told you I would help you as I could," barked Johnny Bull, but nobody understood him except Peggy and Billy.

And so the charm had worked after all—the charm of kindness—and Laughing Man had won the race and his fortune. As for Cranky Jimkins, when he found that the old man he had pitched into the ditch was Farmer Field he didn't stop to try to sell him a motortruck. He saw the farmer coming, with fist shaking in the air, and Cranky Jimkins scooted as fast as his auto would scoot, taking another road for home.

Laughing Man and Peggy and Billy stayed to the party at Farmer Field's house and had a jolly time, which lasted so long that Peggy fell asleep and never woke up until the next morning when she found herself in her own bed at home, wandering how she had gotten there.

(Next week will be told how Rollo, the wandering monkey, goes to school and causes a lot of excitement.)

THE BUSINESS DOCTOR

By HAROLD WHITEHEAD

Author of "The Business Career of Peter Flint" and "Bruno Duke—Solver of Business Problems"

He Jumped at a Conclusion

THE boss was sure there was "something fishy about it and we ought to hire a private detective to find out what's what."

The purchasing agent was sure that he ordered the goods correctly. The receiving clerk swore he weighed the strawboards when they arrived and the weight was correct.

"When did that strawboard come in?" the boss asked.

"Just five months ago." The receiving clerk verified it from his records.

"And you are sure," the boss now quizzed the head bookkeeper, "that every single shipment from the consignment has been verified?"

The bookkeeper nodded his head—he never spoke if he could help it.

The boss turned to the stock-taking sheets and glared at the poor, unoffending pieces of paper. "Humph! There's about 12 per cent of the strawboards missing. No question about it, to my mind. Somebody's stealing!"

An uneasy look passed between the various executives who were closeted with the "big boss," as he was called.

Then the bookkeeper spoke. "Before you hire a detective, let's be sure."

"Sure!" exploded the boss. "What else do you want? We've proved that we received the stuff. We've proved that 12 per cent are missing. What else do you want?"

The bookkeeper turned to the receiving clerk and asked, "What month did it come in?"

"Let's see—er—yes, it came in January 16."

"Where did you put it?"

"For a week it had to stay in the receiving room and then we had to store it in the big back basement room, because number three (a large store room on the second floor) was filled up."

"Is it there now—I mean in the basement?"

"No, we only kept it there until there was room upstairs. It's been upstairs three months now. Why?"

"Nothing." The bookkeeper closed his eyes tight, a habit he had when thinking. A moment later he turned to the boss and said, "Let the matter stay in abeyance for forty-eight hours."

After a slight pause the boss said, "There's no sense in doing it, but if you've got a fad, go chase it. We'll wait forty-eight hours for you to have your little game."

The meeting then adjourned for two days, during which time the bookkeeper was busy on sundry mysterious stunts.

At the appointed time the executives all met again and the boss opened the meeting by saying to the bookkeeper, "Well, Sherlock Holmes, did you trail down the mystery of the stolen strawboards?"

"Yes."

"The devil you did," ejaculated the boss, while all evinced signs of real "interest." "What's the answer?"

"Come here." The bookkeeper led them to the shipping room, where two huge packages of strawboards were on the floor.

"Weigh these two packages."

Silently the men crowded round while the packages were weighed.

"What's the difference?" the bookkeeper asked.

"Why—er—it—it's 12 per cent. Twelve per cent! That's the amount we've had sto— we've had missing." The boss was frankly puzzled.

"Exactly, and the thief is Mr. Dryness."

"Mr. Dryness? Talk sense, man," growled the treasurer.

"Here's the answer. The strawboards came in January 16. I looked up weather for that day and it rained hard all day. Stuff stayed there a week. This room opens to the street and it's quite damp there. The package was weighed and removed and it was taken upstairs. The package stays there three months. Steam pipes make the room dry. Heat draws moisture out of straw boards and they lose 12 per cent weight. I bring bundle down here for two days and I lay the boards in a puddle of water. I use the water can on it a few times. The bundle absorbs water. See? Quite simple."

"I guess," said the boss when the excitement died down. "we had better watch our storing methods a little closer in the future. What trouble we could get into through incorrect storing if we didn't have a Sherlock Holmes"—he nodded at the bookkeeper as he spoke—"to keep us straight."

There's always a best method of storing goods safely and satisfactorily. Are you sure you know it in connection with your line?

Readers' Questions Answered

Mr. Whitehead will answer in this column questions on marketing, buying, selling, advertising, letter-writing, business education, and on matters pertaining to the choice of a vocation. All questions will be answered in the order of receipt. No anonymous correspondence will be acknowledged. Readers' initials will be published. It will take from four to fifteen days for a reply to appear.

A friend who is a printer in Massachusetts is going fifty-fifty with me on the above proposition. We want to get "Ring and Diamond" on sale at athletic clubs this winter. How would you advise us to proceed?

What ideas for marketing and getting publicity for this book can you offer? We've got out the inclosed folder and have many more editorial encomiums we can use. Repay to any initials, please, and believe me we will be more than grateful for any helpful hints.

W. H. G.

Write to the secretaries of the athletic clubs and ask them if they would allow the man in charge of the cigar stands (or other sales counters) to sell your book. If so, to please send you his name.

Then offer to send some on sale or return on condition that he keeps them on display all the time.

During the baseball season could you not get a few boys (used to selling newspapers preferred) to sell the book at the various ball parks?

Advertise it in the leading sporting magazines and offer to send it on the plan of money back if returned in seven days.

I don't know your book (I blush with shame to admit it), but I question if you are charging enough for it. Certainly if you want to sell it by mail you should run the price to even money.

Your advertising folder is weak. You should employ a good advertising agent to prepare your copy for you. At present it lacks strong appeal and arouses no impulse to buy right now.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

GOODBY OLD WEDDING RINGS, BUT GRANDMA PROTESTS

WITH this ring I thee wed, the bridegroom was saying, but according to the old story he never finished the sentence, for the clergyman just here chanced to look down at the ring and he refused to conclude the ceremony. It was all because the wedding ring provided by the bridegroom had a set in it, and, although the set was a diamond, which some consider symbolical of domestic felicity, the clergyman was obdurate.

Perhaps he was a descendant of certain Irish peasants who have long believed that no marriage was legal unless the bride wore a plain gold band. But if many clergymen are of such belief today there will be hundreds of interrupted weddings in our country, for fashion decrees good-by to the plain gold hoop ring and the plain band one of mother's and grandmother's day.

Clarice's new wedding ring, bought at a fashionable jeweler's, decidedly the proper thing, so Clarice says, gave a shock to mother and grandmother and other elderly relatives.

"I wouldn't feel married with that ring on," grandmother whispered emphatically. "Not gold and with sets."

"Sssssh," mother said. "We mustn't say a word." But when the young bride returned from her honeymoon the subject of wedding rings with sets came up quite naturally.

"Of course it is pretty, Clarice, dear," mother said rather apologetically. "But we older folks are so used to plain gold ones, and they mean so much."

"But, mother," the bride argued, "these are the very latest things out, and, besides, I read when Cleopatra and all the early queens of history had wedding rings with sets in them. It's just an old custom come back."

Just Like Cleopatra's

"Well, if Cleopatra had one with sets," grandmother rejoined, "I certainly would want one without sets. It's strange to me, Clarice, when you've been raised a good Episcopalian, you don't remember what the beautiful ceremony says about the plain gold band, being symbolical of unity and purity and perpetual devotion, and——"

"No, grandmother," mother interrupts, "it isn't the ceremony that says that. It is just what some preachers put in to make it sound pretty, for folks have felt that way about it so long."

"Well, I'm sorry you don't like it," Clarice says, as she turns the little band of platinum with its twinkling stones admiringly on her finger, "but some people are so crazy over these they are taking their old wedding rings down and having them made over, the gold covered with platinum, and maybe some sets put in."

Grandmother threw up her hands in horror. "What are women coming to? Think of me having this ring your grandfather put on my finger, made over, or having one thing done to it? Why, this wedding ring is more precious than anything I have," and there are tears in grandmother's eyes.

"Well, your ring is pretty," mother adds, "and, of course, it's just a bit hard to educate your grandmother and me along some lines. But what I can't see is where you put the posey, or love thought, in a ring like that? You see, daughter, mine has our first names spelled out clear, and then the word 'Mizpah,' which means a whole lot. But your grandmother had this quotation in hers, although most of it is worn away:

"Our contract was heaven's act,
In thee, my choice, I do rejoice."

DOROTHY DARNIT—As a Visitor, Dorothy Is Open to Inducements

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By Chas. McManus